

His Beta 243

Chapter 243

Mason

Gabriela had gone to bed. The kids were all sleeping Zane and I had taken up our posts on the front porch, not saying much. He sipped occasionally from a glass of whiskey, neat. I had one, too.

“They should’ve been back by now,” he said into the silence that had stretched out so long and thin it was like a spider web between us. Making a trap.

“My brother will make sure nothing happens to her.”

Zane eyed me. “I know that.”

“Well,” I told him amiably, “I know it, too.”

There was more silence between us, but it wasn’t as sticky.

“Are you ready for this?” I asked him after a few more minutes had passed.

“Fuck, no.”

I laughed, and after a moment, Zane joined in.

“When you knew her as Katie,” he said. “Was she different?”

The whiskey in my glass tasted like smoke, and I let it roll over and around my tongue before I

answered him. "I didn't know her before she was Katie, so I can't say if she was different than she'd

been. But she was different than she is now, yeah. In a lot of ways. But in some, she's exactly the

same."

"It was a good thing she had you," he said quietly. "When we couldn't be there for her."

"It wasn't your fault," I started, but Zane shook his head..

"Fault doesn't matter. We weren't there for her the way we should have been before she was sent to

Stillwood, before she became Katie. Me and Xander...we were a pair of arrogant pricks."

"From what I understand, you were in love with a woman who made promises she had no intentions of

keeping." I cleared my throat so it wouldn't squeeze tight with angry memories.

Zane raised his glass toward me. "You were in love with her, too. Seems like no matter what any of us

had

planned, we were all three destined to end up with the same woman, one way or another."

"I don't know about love. I'd have agreed with you before, but after falling in love with Katie...with

Lanie," I amended. "Once I felt what I do for her, everything that I'd ever felt for anyone else, including

Alice, just doesn't seem like it matters too much. But maybe you're right. The Moon Goddess had plans for the three of us we could never have guessed. I mean, what are the odds that we'd all fall for the same woman not once, but twice?"

"It sure seems like we were as destined for each other as we were for our Luna," Zane said.

It might've been the perfect moment to ask him how he felt about being my Reta too but I didn't have the

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words. We'd shared a lover, a bed, pups, and a mate, but even that didn't seem intimate enough to pledge himself to me.

While I was still thinking about this, Zane got to his feet. "There they are."

The two wolves bounded out of the forest and across the yard. Hunter carried the duffel in his mouth while Lily pranced around him in circles. She ran to the porch and put her front paws on the bottom step. Her tongue tolled out as she grinned. I felt the joy she was experiencing from the long run

coursing off her in waves, and Colt pressed forward, eager to greet her.

I stripped bare in half a minute and changed. Colt joined Hunter and Lily, leaping and rolling onto his

back for a few seconds before jumping up again. Blade was there, too.

Blade sat back to lift his muzzle to the moon. He bayed, and Hunter joined. Lily's howl rose into the

chorus and finally, so did Colt's.

Four wolves in perfect harmony.

Perfect sync.

Colt would've run forever, but when Lily's great shaggy form rippled and shifted, returning to Lanie's

human shape, we all did the same.

Now, four naked people stood in a circle on the grass with a duffel bag in the center of us. The wolves'

happiness lingered. My heart had lifted. There'd been a lot of tension going around, but our quartet

sharing in the ritual of giving our wolves control felt like it had bonded us even closer.

"You got it?" Zane asked Lanie. He had one arm slung over Xander's shoulders and the other over

mine.

She nodded and moved toward him for a kiss. "Yes. We got it. You'll have just enough time for the

fasting period to complete before it's time to take it, if we go inside right now and have the biggest

breakfast anyone

ever ate"

"In a minute," Zane said. "I want us to stand like this, just another minute."

So we did. Four souls bound to each other for reasons we didn't know and would probably never be

able to find out. We'd truly been granted the blessings of the Moon Goddess.

Lanie unhooked herself from under my arm. Her voice was bright and cheerful, but there was

something much darker in her eyes. A flash of emotion I couldn't figure out, and I realized it wasn't

Lanie I was seeing in that moment. It passed, quicker than a flash of lighting, but I'd seen her as Katie.

Not the woman we all loved and shared, but the one I'd loved and who'd loved me alone.